SOUTH BEND NEWS-TIMES

Morning—Evening—Sunday.

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FEBRUARY 29, 1916.

GREAT BRITAIN IS PILLING UP ENORMOUS WAR DEBT.

We could pay our national debt tomorrow if we all chipped in $10 apiece.

At the time of our greatest indebtedness, at the close of the civil war, the United States owed $60 per capita.

The national debt of Great Britain, at the end of the present year, according to the present rate of expenditure, will be nearly $400 per capita.

That is a staggering burden. It means $2,000 for every family. Premier Asquith says that the war debt up to Jan. 1 was "enough to strain the resources of the nation for a generation." Next New Year's day, if the war lasts so long, will see it doubled. That will make a total of $16,000,000,000. And England will be lucky if it stops there.

It is by far the biggest indebtedness any government ever assumed. And yet considered relatively, it is smaller than the British national debt at the close of the Napoleonic wars. That amounted to only $4,500,000,000, but it must be remembered that there were only one-third as many people then to share the burden. Moreover, the comparative value of gold was much greater then.

Great Britain might incur a debt of perhaps $25,000,000,000 now without being any worse off than she was after she had put down the Napoleonic peril. She can keep on fighting two years more without straining her resources any more than they were strained a century ago.

FORTUNES IN JUNK SHIPS THROW LIGHT ON SHIPPING PROBLEM.

Four years ago the fire-blackened hull of an old steamer called the Dunholme was sold at auction in Bayonne, N. J., for $30,000. The other day the Standard Oil Co. bought that "junk ship" for $850,000. She will be used to carry oil to Europe.

That shows the shipping situation. Never in the history of the country has there been such a demand for vessels. Never have freight rates been so high. Never have ships commanded such high prices. Never have shippers been so willing to charter any sort of craft that looks as if it might keep afloat long enough to reach the other side.

American ports are crowded with tramp steamers from the world's ends. Dozens of old derelicts have been taken out of the berths where they lay rotting, and been dispatched with cargoes of foodstuffs or munitions without so much as a new coat of paint. Many a vessel has brought her owners more than her own value in a single voyage.

Such a condition naturally stimulates the growth of our merchant marine, but not so much as might be expected. Many of the ships admitted to American registry may go to the boneyard at any time. New ships are appearing; all our shipyards are working day and night; but it's a slow process, and we haven't half enough shipyards to keep up with the demand.

THE ANTI-VICE INDICTMENTS AND THE SCHOOL BOARD CONTROVERSY.

Whether or not Mayor Fred W. Keller ever assured Councilman Arthur Miller that his name would not go before the grand jury, when it was learned that he was among the "indictables," is a secondary matter. The same is true in the case of Patrolman Harry Teeters, and of Ed Shannon, reputed as a professional gambler, who, it is said, was promised his immunity by proxy. It is enough that Prosecutor Montgomery brought out before the grand jury the evidence against these men, as it seems to have existed, and that the jury voted indictments in spite of the mayor's wishes. The main point, however, is, now that the indictments are out, that the whole thing is pretty much of a "flash in the pan," amounting to about as much as an ordinary raid on somebody's hencoop.

The time is passed when Mayor Keller can stir up enough racket with one of his vice crusades to detract attention from his other political maneuvers, such, for instance, as the school board's assault on our public school system. The people of South Bend don't care enough any more, as to what happens to violators of the liquor laws, or to gamblers, or to those who insist upon taking chances with other similar vices. The public, even his special constituency, will hardly thank the mayor to presume to say who shall be indicted or who not, and will be prone to overlook, or in other words, credit him with, so much effort to live up to his platform promises, but the time is past when this one line of activity can serve to cover up his failures in everything else.

Does the mayor use his so-called anti-vice activities as cloaks behind which to hide his other movements? Follow the present situation and formulate your own guess. On Feb. 4th came the first public news that Supt. Montgomery was in danger of discharge. There was considerable activity in his behalf. The principals and teachers in the grade schools inaugurated a movement for his retention, and a citizens' committee was organized in an effort to get at the bottom of the thing. The teachers sent 4,000 cards home with the school children to their parents with the request that they voice their protest, should they see fit to do so. In 24 hours 3,114 of these cards had been returned, and a further citizens' meeting was planned for Tuesday night, but it was called off. It was called off because the school board had given the committee to understand that the matter would be fixed up all satisfactory to the public, implying that Supt. Montgomery would be retained. Down rings the curtain on act one.

The first scene of the second act was a great "hellabaloo" that we now believe was wriggled into the next Sunday morning newspaper, about numerous indictments that were to be obtained from the grand jury, that would be full of surprises for South Bend. One might almost have guessed from the strains of mystery and promised surprises, that perhaps the ministerial association had been caught gambling. The townsfolk were supposed to lose their heads and fly off into space. Some of them did. Sunday and Monday were full of hushed questionings as to who was to be caught in the grand jury net—and then Monday night, when everybody was to have their attention securely fastened on the vice investigation, the school board held a quiet meeting ostensibly to consider architect's plans for a new school house, but as an appendix, to hand the public the double-cross, and Supt. Montgomery the boot. There you have it.

But Mayor Keller and his school board appointees miscalculated the public interest in his anti-vice crusade. About the only people who cared anything in particular were those who feared they were to get a bit scorched. Decent people want the laws enforced, yes, but there is more than bizarre law enforcement to municipal life. Mayor Keller has perhaps found by this time that the masses of the people, and the better elements, are just a bit more interested in the welfare of the schools than they are in his law-enforcement noise, and that they decline to be further hypnotized by that noise. For noise, as the indictments show, is about all that there was to it. He gets 131 indictments for 60 men—it sounds big because they are indictments—for offenses that any well-regulated police force might have detected without special vice sleuth assistance; that is, perhaps, with the exception of those games which the sleuths themselves inaugurated, inviting their friends to set in with them, as if in order that they might catch someone and make at least a semi-showing.

We have said it before, and we repeat it now, that when public officials find it necessary to promote crime in order to detect it, the community is pretty clean, and that the officials that indulge in such promotion, are, morally at least, accessories before the fact. It isn't excusable even that a "reform" administration, such as Mayor Keller's presumes to be, may have something to crow over, or use to make the people believe it is really doing something wonderfully good, while behind it, it is playing its real game at something else.

We assert it, and can prove it as effectually as the logic of his campaign performances and subsequent activities in office can prove anything, that Mayor Keller's entire law enforcement program is a brazen hypocracy, and that he would never have pursued such a policy for an instant, had he not needed it for a shield, and had not Burr F. Augustine, president of his board of safety, the clergy of the city, and last, but not least, the newspapers, kept constantly on his back. We do not doubt for an instant but that he promised Councilman Miller immunity, but that doesn't matter, save that of course, he is enough of a politician to want to keep his councilmanic support, if possible.

And then, he may have had that Fort Wayne incident in mind, when he is said to have bought a round of drinks "on the city of South Bend"—just a little beer party, of course, and it develops that most of the gamblers arrested had indulged in just a little card party. The real downright gambling joints in town have not been touched.

Wonderful reform wave! Great mayor!

DOES THE "PEOPLE'S BUSINESS" ENTITLE THEM TO SCHOOL BOARD "CONFIDENCE."

Lewis Wilbur Hammond, who aside from Homer Miller and in spite of him, was the star defender of "Lord" Mayor Keller and his appointees to the board of education at the "Washington birthday party" at the Muessel school house last week, files a verbal exception to the language in which he was quoted as addressing that body.

According to Mr. Hammond he did not say, "it is none of the people's business," as to why Messrs. Rupel and Clem declined to renew the contract of Supt. L. J. Montgomery, but that he did not "regard it as necessary that the school board take the public into its confidence every time it wishes to discharge a man, and give out all its reasons." This bit of diplomatic wording ought to commend Mr. Hammond for the diplomatic service. Even if his present memory serves him right, it formulates such a distinction without a difference, as to be worthy of mention.

Mr. Hammond marks the distinction this way. "If I meet a man on the street and he tells me something that I don't believe, and I tell him 'I don't believe it,' it is quite different from calling him a 'liar.'"

Probably, we would say, in the nature of the response, but mainly because of the difference in rawness rather than the real import.

Take it down south, for an illustration, where they are shorter on the diplomatic mincing of words, as a loophole through which to crawl out, and it wouldn't make any difference whether you called a man a liar, or just told him you didn't believe him.

Some years ago, the writer in conversation with a southerner in Richmond, Va., was listening to a story of a surprising nature, and expressed his surprise by use of a typical and harmless northern expression, "is that so?" The southerner at once challenged the questioning of his veracity.

If someone will point out to us how it can be any "of the people's business," if it is not "necessary that the school board take the public into its confidence," when requested to, and "give out all its reasons," for "discharging a man," whom the public would like to have retained, and for which discharge the reasons are demanded, then we will conclude, as Mr. Hammond would like to have us imply, that even though it is "the people's business," the board is under no obligations to take those people "into its confidence," when so requested.

It looks to us about as much like a case of "to hell with the people" in one case as in the other, mere shifting of words not changing the significance.

And therefore we anticipate our inclinations to let our report of the Muessel school "Washington birthday party" stand.

The old fable of Pandora's box, from which diseases escaped to fasten themselves on helpless humanity, is recalled by the theft in Philadelphia of a set of doctor's culture tubes containing billions of diphtheria germs. Philadelphia is hoping that the thief will be more careful with them than Pandora was with her box of bacilli.

At the American Berkshire congress held at the agricultural experiment station at New Brunswick, N. J., a hog sold for $1,125. That brings the price of pork almost up to the standard prevailing in the national congress at Washington.

Now that the Woolen trust has begun to pay dividends on its common stock, Prosperity may be said to have stormed the last trenches of Pessimism in the eastern business zone.

Americans are "reasonably adequately protected" against Mexicans. In three years past, 20 civilians and 16 soldier Americans have been killed on American soil by Mexicans. But we bagged 92 Mexicans.

THE MELTING POT

FILLED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF

The man who is sick
Is never quick
To see the point of a joke.
So if our stuff passes you
We'll know it's true
You're either ill or broke.

"Old stuff," said the girl behind us in the moving picture show, when it showed a scene of a man buying wine for the girl.

"Now," said the kid a few seats from us, "Santa won't be able to come. They have gone and killed his deer."

Occasionally we feel sorry for our standing army and move that it be seated.

"You mean," said the office pest, "that I could not have the brain fever."

"No," said the bright reporter who does obits, "we mean your fever when you had it was only 98½."

Will some proud father rise up and tell us when the record for early speech on the part of an infant was set.

TO THE RESCUE.

What's wrong with my name and
People,
Steeple,
Said W. D. Teeple.

So far as we can see there is nothing wrong with the rhyme, and we thank Mr. Teeple very much. In fact if we had time we would write a poem and use his name.

"Boy," said the ebony philosopher, "that man don't care for money a-tall. He can kick a nail and never notice it."

CALL FOR INSPIR.

There are times when even the best of us say, "I am sorry, but owing to my short notice I am unable to deliver a speech this evening, but—" and then go ahead and talk for an hour and a half.

THE QUESTION.

What shall I write about,
A Ford or a runabout?
What little lay will I sing?
Shall I harp on spring
Or sing of the beauties of snow;
The wintry winds that blow?
A thousand visions cross my brain,
But they never come back again.
I cannot think, I cannot write.
I cannot dream of J. Frost's bite,
And so, alas! my song is ended.
I said just what I first intended.

E. J. M.

There are several of our intimate acquaintances who refuse to visit the dentist for fear war will be declared.

In fact they seem to glory in an aching tooth.

Naturally that question of a foul line caused some debate.

SOME THINGS ABOUT TOBACCO.

Works of genius are not expected from college student publications, but here's a characterization of tobacco that seems good enough to win immortality. It's from "Froth," a paper published by the undergraduates of Pennsylvania state college.

Tobacco is a dirty weed;
I like it.
It satisfies no moral need;
I like it.
It makes you thin, it makes you lean,
It takes the hair right off your bean.
It's the worst darn stuff I've ever seen;
I like it.

Such logic is unanswerable. A truly wise critic would handle alcohol in about the same way.

A call to arms would find many deaf.

The Status of Mr. White.

From the Buffalo, Okla., Democrat.

S. E. White was in town last Saturday, and while in town called to shake with the Democrat man. He said, "I just came in to tell you good bye before I leave for Mars." S. E. don't appear to have very many characteristics of a socialist. He sometimes gets rather noisy, but we hardly believe that he is entirely to blame for that as it is more than probable that he was born a-howling and has never fully gotten over it.

"There goes that dame, that parts her hair in the middle with a big nose."—Submitted by the boy who loafs around the shop.

Up to the last German drive, this war seemed to play a little game all of its own; just one trench after another.

With Other Editors Than Ours

THE MEANS.

(Peoria, Ill., Journal.)

The response to Pres't Wilson's appeal for preparedness leaves no room to doubt that the sentiment of the nation is favorable to reasonable measures for national defense. There may be differences of opinion as to the extent of the measures to be taken, but aside from the confirmed passifists there cannot be said to be any formidable opposition to adequate preparation. With this much practically settled, the question arises as to the means for financing preparedness. A larger army and navy are going to cost a huge sum—more than the income tax, the internal revenues and even the highest tariff can provide.

The one source of additional income open to the federal government is an inheritance tax. An inheritance tax lays the burden on those best able to bear it; it taxes the property of those who have not earned, but merely received; it is easily collectable; it will serve as a wholesome corrective in a social way.

Practically every other enlightened government in the world levies a substantial tax on inheritances. Why not the United States, which holds itself the most democratic of nations?

TEN THOUSAND SURGEONS.

(Scranton, Pa., Times.)

Surgeon General Gorgas of the United States army—and there is no higher or more efficient sanitary authority in the world — thinks the United States government, before many years have elapsed, will require 10,000 army surgeons. Looking ahead to this day, the army's chief physician and surgeon urged upon the Congress of the Medical association, meeting in Chicago, the need of determining and listing the eligible physicians and surgeons of the congress for war service, so that the government will have an ample supply of these necessary individuals.

Mobilization of the doctors of the country is a necessary part of preparedness, and Gen. Gorgas does well to emphasize it. Among many people there will be an impression that it will be easier to get 10,000 surgeons for military service than 10,000 soldiers. Do not believe it. When the surgeon general of the United States army speaks of physicians and surgeons he is not figuring on the lame ducks of the profession.

In war as in peace it is necessary to have competent doctors. It is more necessary in war time because in war the available male military strength in all nations is limited. This makes it essential that the wounded soldier be repaired quickly and permanently, so that he may take his place at the front again. Inexperienced or incompetent doctors would only help to decimate the ranks.

What it is possible to accomplish with good surgeons is strikingly manifest in the war in Europe. Before the war the world expected that it would not be many months before terrible pestilences would sweep through the ranks of Europe's soldiery. There have been outbreaks of typhus and other diseases, but more of the civil population have been killed by them than soldiers. For the first time history is being reversed. More men are being killed and incapacitated in a battle than by germ diseases. That it is so is due to the precautions and skill of the doctors and surgeons.

The most noted medical men in Europe are looking after the health of the armies. The best doctors work in the laboratories, prescribe for and treat the men. Doctors are graded according to their skill, the more delicate work being left to the most skilled, while ailments of lesser importance are handled by men according to their learning and their reputations.

The doctor in war must have a knowledge of camp sanitation and the proper foods for soldiers in various climates plus his ordinary ability of knowing how to employ drugs in cleansing and healing wounds and keeping the bodily organs in a state of efficiency. Gen. Gorgas sounds a timely note when he pleads for a system that will enable the government to place its hands upon surgeons upon whom it may rely without worry in time of stress.

BLACK WALNUT NOW IN DEMAND.

(Rochester, N. Y., Democrat and Chronicle.)

The opinion has come to be quite general that American black walnut lumber, of sufficient size for use in the manufacture of gun stocks, had become practically exhausted. A Kansas City manufacturer, whose plant is turning out 2,000 stocks a day under contract, reports that black walnut lumber is obtainable in desired quantities. Another factory is fully as active, and carloads of black walnut logs are arriving in Kansas City every day. The explanation seems to be that, owing to the slight demand for this variety of wood for furniture, due to change in fashions, black walnut trees have been allowed to stand and arrive at maturity. This is practically the only wood suitable for gun stocks. Now owners of walnut trees are reaping their harvest. Incidentally, such are the vagaries of taste in furniture, black walnut is again becoming the fashion and bids fair to regain its former popularity.

WOULD NEVER LOVE ANOTHER.

(Salem, Ore., Capital Journal.)

The talk about some of the European countries sending an army of half a million or more trained and seasoned soldiers over here after the war ends, and capturing the United States, has its humorous side. We fancy when the war is over all the participants will have had enough of it to satisfy them for awhile, at least. Most of the soldiers will be in the condition of a recruit during the Civil war. He was complaining bitterly about the hardships, the lack of food and comforts he was used to and bewailing his condition generally, when his lieutenant, overhearing him, asked: "What's the matter Bill? Don't you love your country?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I love my country well enough to leave my wife and family, to go without a decent bed, and eat blamed poor grub, and take the chance of being killed or crippled for it, but I want to tell you lieutenant that when this war is over I will never love another country."

RAILROADS AND THE MAIL SERVICE.

(Wilmington, Del., Every Evening.)

Because the leading railroad systems of the country are protesting against the enactment of the Moon Railway Pay bill, now before congress, they have been accused of "lobbying," but the accusation does not justly lie against them. They are not "lobbying," but are working hard in the most open and fair manner, to make their opposition effective. There is a great difference between an honest presentation of the railroads' case in respect of this important matter, and the kind of work that comes under the term "lobbying."

It is no wonder the railroads are opposing the Moon bill. They are imposed upon outrageously by present conditions in respect of the mail service and their compensation. Under the Moon bill the imposition would become worse.

The Moon bill proposes a "space plan" of pay to all the railroads for carrying the mails and parcel post. This means that the mail pay of the railroads is to stand still while the tonnage carried in the mail cars is to be increased indefinitely. It was so interpreted by the chairman of the house postoffice committee at a recent hearing.

Under the Moon bill the railroads could be forced to carry parcel post freight in passenger trains for as little as 1 1-4 cents per ton per mile, or even less, whereas the interstate commerce commission allows them to charge 2 to 7 cents per ton per mile for merchandise freight in freight trains.

The Moon bill would empower the postmaster general to make the rates and dictate nearly all the terms for carrying the mails. It would compel submission to his decrees by confiscatory fines of $5,000 per day for each refusal. That a shipper should have power to make and enforce rates is contrary to the principles of justice.

The "space plan" of pay proposed by the Moon bill ignores all recognized principles of rate-making. It would deny the railroads payment for service rendered, which is the weight of the mail carried and the distance it is hauled. It disregards the fact that every freight and express rate in the world is fixed on the weight-and-distance basis, and that the postoffice department itself charges parcel postage on that basis.

The railroad opposition, therefore, is based on justice and fair business principles. Congress should not force this proposed imposition.

ESKIMOS AND PARCEL POST.

(Cleveland Press.)

The difference between being cheated and being fairly treated is the difference which the natives of northern Alaska owe to the fact that Uncle Sam finally decided to go into the parcel post business.

Before the parcel post came, it was possible for the Eskimos on the shores of Bering sea and the Arctic ocean and in other remote regions of Alaska to dispose of their valuable furs, ivory, and whalebone only to local traders, with the result that they usually received low prices for their wares and were constantly in debt to the traders.

Now, however, since Uncle Sam went into the business of transporting parcels, many Eskimos who have been educated in the schools forward regularly their packages of fox, lynx, and mink skins, and their ivory and whalebone to the office of the Alaska division of the bureau of education in Seattle, which sells the furs for them at public auction. Result: Natives are now receiving full value for their goods.

The express companies saw no profits in express business in northern Alaska.